



## James Prater

June 13, 2025

James (Jim) Prater, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and proud Navy veteran, passed away peacefully at home on June 13, 2025, surrounded by his loved ones. He was 90.

Born on July 13, 1934, in Spokane, Washington, Jim was raised on a farm near Colfax, WA by his parents, the late Orval and Mamie Taylor Prater. He graduated from Colfax High School in 1952 and went on to attend Central Washington State University before answering the call to serve his country.

In 1955, Jim entered the Navy Aviation Cadet Program and began a distinguished 24½-year career as a Naval Aviator. He was a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War and retired as a Captain from the Navy in July 1979. He furthered his education at the Naval Postgraduate School in 1972 and earned a master's degree from the University of Southern California in 1975.

Following his military service, Jim continued to dedicate himself to education, as a professor in the Institute of Technology at Northrop University in Los Angeles, California, from 1982 until his retirement in 1991. He also volunteered at the Ventura County Rescue Mission Learning Center in Oxnard, California. His love of learning and teaching extended beyond the classroom—he found deep joy in tutoring and mentoring his children and

grandchildren.

Jim married the love of his life, Beverly LaVaughn Gunn, in Pensacola, Florida, in June 1963. Together, they built a life filled with travel, resilience, and deep family bonds through many years of military service. After his retirement, Jim eventually settled in Northern Virginia in 2002, where he remained close to family.

Jim will be remembered for his keen intellect, generous spirit, and deep love for his family. An avid reader and lifelong learner, he modeled integrity, perseverance, and quiet strength to all who knew him.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife Beverly; his parents Orval and Mamie Prater; siblings Thelma Bensley, Maxine Rode, and Billy Prater; son Scott Hutson; grandson Joshua Pierce; and sons-in-law Marvin Pierce and Dennis Thompson.

He is survived by his children: Melanie Gibbs (Lou) of Edenton, NC; Linda Thompson of Gainesville, VA; Sandi Pierce of Gainesville, VA; Mitzi Stites (Steve) of Stockton, CA; and daughter-in-law Christine Hutson Johnson (Brian) of Charlottesville, VA, and a cousin, Eddie Taylor of Montana.

Jim was a proud grandfather to Christy Vega (Gus), Kelly Gibbs, Jim Gibbs (Ariana Murphy), Tara Hakenson (Jason), Jeni Thompson (Justin Welborn), Denise Scott (Chris), Heather Pierce (Darwin Carlisle), Alexis Hutson, Matt Hutson, Conner Hutson, Christopher Stites, and Jeremy Stites, and great-grandfather to Emily Vega, Lilly Vega, Jaylyn Hakenson, Jason Hakenson, Jules Hakenson, Kayla Thompson, Darrien Peacock, Brayden Welborn, Nathan Welborn, Ava Scott, and Cara Scott.

His legacy lives on in the family he loved so deeply, in the students he inspired, and in the countless lives he touched with quiet wisdom and grace.

Graveside services will be held on June 25, 2025 at 1:30 at Quantico.

“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing there is a field. I’ll meet you there.”

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service

JUN **25**. 1:30 PM (ET)

Quantico National Cemetery  
18424 Joplin Rd  
Triangle, VA 22172-1636  
(703) 221-2183

# Tribute Wall

FT

“ *This was a great man, and such a great example in every way. I will miss our conversations we had, and am very blessed Jim was my cousin! I learned so much from him! His input, and advice to me, are so valued! I love you my cousin!*

FrankEddie Taylor - June 28, 2025 at 03:02 PM

GT

“ *Jimmy (as I knew him) was my cousin, I'm Eddie's sister. He was a bit older than us cousins. His mother Mamie was my Dad's sister. Jimmy was always a kind person and someone we did look up to. He was always so pleasant to be around and very respectful. And handsome, I might add. Eddie kept in touch with him and spoke so highly of him, enjoying their conversations. I remember fondly having chicken dinners (she was the best cook) at Aunt Mamie's and Jimmy being there. I have a baby photo of him, some early photos and his picture of when he was a Pilot. If any of his family would like them, I'd be happy to send them. May he rest in peace!*

Gaye Taylor - June 24, 2025 at 06:56 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of James Prater.*



June 20, 2025 at 09:57 PM



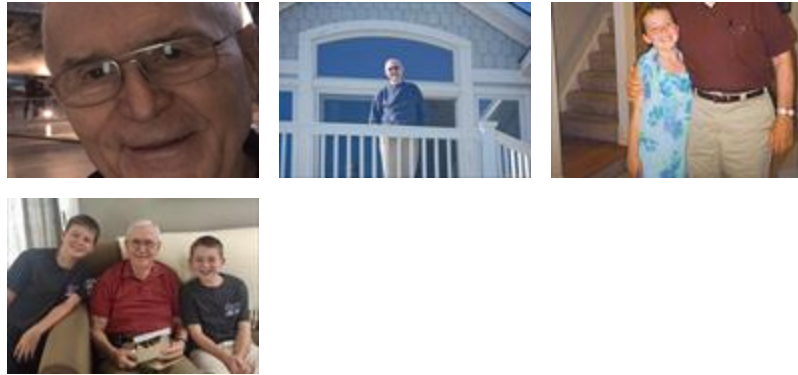
“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of James Prater.

---

June 20, 2025 at 09:57 PM



“ 4 files added to the album Dad



---

**Christine Hutson** - June 18, 2025 at 02:28 PM